T&E AGENDA: 03-03-08
ITEM: d

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: James R. Helmer
Robert L. Davis

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON RESIDENTIAL TRAFFIC CALMING COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

DATE: 02-22-08

Approved [signature] Date 2/26/08

Council District: City-wide

RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation and Environment Committee (T&E) accept this report on Traffic Calming and direct staff to:

a. Return to the T&E Committee in May 2008 with recommended modifications to Council Policy 5-6 on Residential Traffic Calming.

b. Conduct further investigation of red light running automated enforcement programs in other jurisdictions, and report back to the T&E Committee in May 2008.

c. Continue to explore ways to increase traffic enforcement and parking compliance in neighborhoods and school zones with existing resources.

d. Evaluate potential traffic calming and/or enforcement proposals as part of the 2008-09 budget process within the context of the City's existing structural budget deficit.

OUTCOME

Acceptance of this report will provide direction to staff to proceed with development of recommended modifications to Council Policy 5-6, and changes to various existing programs to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of delivering traffic calming and enforcement services.

BACKGROUND

Council Policy 5-6 addresses Traffic Calming for Residential Neighborhoods and was adopted by the City Council in June 2001. The policy was developed with a goal to improve traffic conditions and livability within San José neighborhoods, and to plan and build traffic calming improvements with new developments or projects. Among other provisions, Council Policy 5-6 outlines the guidelines and processes for review of residential traffic concerns and implementation of appropriate measures.

The guidelines within the policy have been primarily used by the Department of Transportation (DOT) to respond to neighborhood traffic concerns. Although the policy has served the City well in the past six years, there are factors that support revisiting the policy. Some of the tools provided for in the existing policy are no longer available. There are also new technologies, such as solar-powered speed display signs, that were not readily available when the policy was initially established. Lastly, several neighborhoods have expressed a desire for exceptions, or an appeals process, that is not currently provided for in the current policy.

This past year, the City Council approved exemptions to the Council Policy 5-6 to provide for pilot projects on two neighborhood streets. Exemptions to the policy were required in order for these projects to occur as traffic conditions in these neighborhoods were not considered "adverse" as defined in the policy. Per the policy, an "adverse" traffic condition is one where the speeds, volumes, or number of crashes is 10% or more above the citywide average for comparable streets.

During the Fall 2007, Councilmember Oliverio facilitated a series of 10 Residential Traffic Calming Community Meetings, with one meeting occurring in each council district. The meetings were held to gather input from San José residents on the existing policy, to solicit feedback on potential changes to the policy, and to recommend priorities for the City to consider in continuing to address neighborhood traffic concerns.

On December 2, 2007, a status report based on input received from 9 community meetings was provided to the T&E Committee. Subsequent to the status report, DOT and the Police Department have reviewed input received from all 10 community meetings, and the web-based survey hosted by the Administration and Councilmember Oliverio. In addition, DOT benchmarked traffic calming programs in 27 other municipalities and reviewed traffic conditions on a representative sample of 50 streets to evaluate City-wide impacts of potential modifications to the traffic calming policy. Staff also reviewed results of the 2003, 2005 and preliminary results of the 2007 Community Surveys to compare responses to the traffic calming community meetings and Web survey.

The May 2007 City Auditor's report on the Traffic Calming Program recommended that consideration be given to funding larger projects on a priority ranking system basis vs. the current Council policy of funding projects on a first-come, first-served basis. Establishing a priority system would provide funding of larger projects on a ranked basis. A similar system is used for prioritizing use of the limited funding available for the installation of traffic signals.

Additionally, State Assembly Bill 321, approved during the 2007 legislative session allows a city or county, under certain criteria on roads that are currently posted with speed limits of 30mph or less, to establish a prima facie speed limit of 15mph in school zones. Current law establishes 25mph as the prima facie speed limit in school zones.

ANALYSIS

City-wide Traffic Conditions

As indicated in the December T&E report, San José is one of the safest big cities in the nation when considering traffic safety. Over the past 17 years, the injury crash rate has continually declined, with an injury crash rate of 3.01 crashes per 1,000 population in calendar year 2007. The national average injury crash rate for 2006 was much higher at 5.95 crashes per 1,000 population. This difference in crash rate is significant and equates to an avoidance of approximately 2,900 injury crashes on San José streets when compared to the national average. In addition, although the population in San José has increased, the total aggregate number of injury crashes has decreased over the same time period. Specifically, as highlighted in Chart 1, while the population in San José has increased 24% since 1990, the total number of reported injury crashes has dropped 44%.

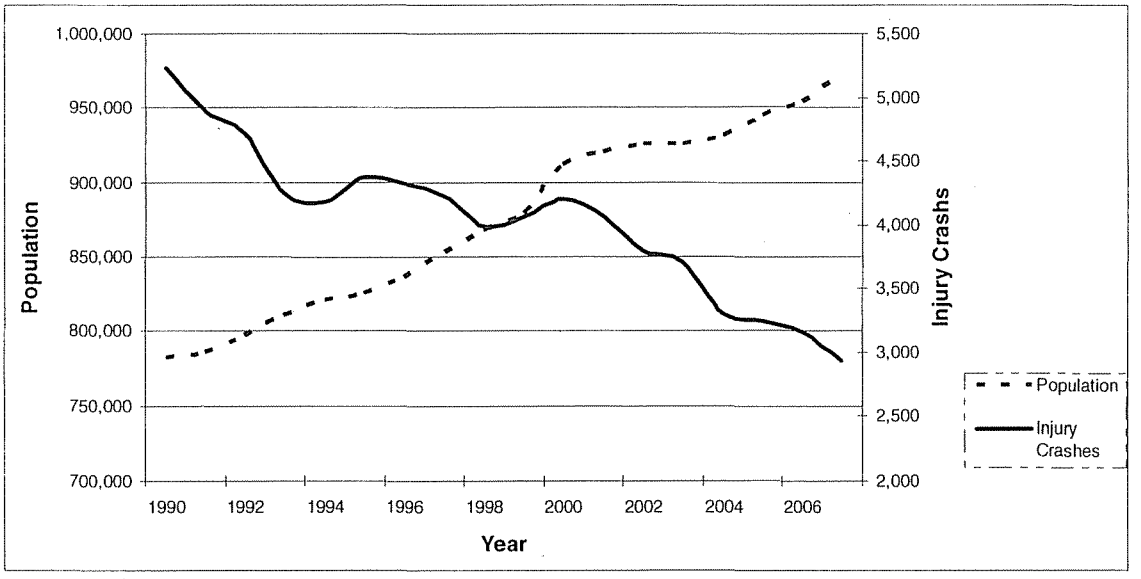

Chart 1 – Comparison of Injury Crashes to Population, 1990-2007

The City of San José 2005 Community Survey of 1,000 residents indicated that a significant majority (73%) of the community felt that traffic conditions in their neighborhood was acceptable and they felt safe while driving (83%) and walking (79%) in San José. These results were close to the input received from residents in 2003, and preliminary results taken from the 2007 Community Survey appear to be similar.

Community Meetings vs. City-wide Perceptions

Many of the approximate 350 residents who attended the residential traffic calming community meetings indicated that traffic conditions in their neighborhoods were unacceptable and improvements were needed. Although the city-wide average speed on 25 mph posted residential streets is 26 mph, a substantial number of residents at the community meetings indicated that many vehicles were traveling at speeds of 40 to 50 mph and higher.

In addition to providing input at the meetings, residents were asked to complete an informal Traffic Calming (TC) Survey to rate their perceptions of traffic conditions, provide their views on potential changes to the traffic calming policy, and prioritize various potential methods to improve neighborhood traffic conditions. The survey questions relating to perceptions of safety and traffic conditions were the same or comparable to questions asked on the 2003, 2005 and 2007 Community Surveys. A copy of the TC Survey is shown as Attachment A. A majority (255 residents) of meeting attendees completed the surveys. Additionally, the survey was posted on-line and completed by another 185 residents.

Comparisons of the survey responses by meeting attendees, respondents to the Web survey and the 2003 and 2005 Community Surveys is highlighted below in Table 1. The ratings shown for perceptions of safety reflect ratings of 'Very Safe' and 'Somewhat Safe'. Similarly, the ratings shown for perceptions of traffic flow reflect ratings of 'Very Acceptable' and 'Acceptable'. A complete breakdown of survey responses by rating category is shown as Attachment B.

	Fall 2007 TC Meetings (255)	Fall 2007 TC Web Survey (185)	2003 City Community Survey (1,000)	2005 City Community Survey (1,000)
Feel safe driving on San José	56 %	61 %	81 %	83 %
Feel safe bicycling in San José	15 %	17 %	41 %	48 %
Feel safe walking in San José	38 %	47 %	75 %	79 %
Feel safe walking in neighborhood during the day	70 %	78 %	90 %	90 %
Feel safe walking in neighborhood during the night	37 %	48 %	68 %	72 %
View traffic flow or traffic impacts in neighborhood as acceptable	35 %	32 %	75 %	73 %
View traffic flow on City streets during commute as acceptable	29 %	29 %	59 %	60 %
View traffic flow on local freeways and expressways as acceptable	36 %	34 %	46 %	45 %

Table 1 – Comparison of Resident Perceptions

As highlighted above, a majority of the meeting attendees perceive traffic conditions as either unsafe or unacceptable. Generally, while respondents to the on-line survey perceived traffic conditions slightly more favorable than did meeting attendees, these residents also had a more negative view of traffic conditions than did residents in prior city-wide Community Surveys. The substantial difference in perception is likely due to the tendency that residents with concerns about traffic are more inclined to either attend a community meeting or respond to a web survey than those who do not have concerns.

Neighborhood Priorities

The Fall 2007 TC Survey also solicited specific input from residents on ways to improve traffic conditions in their neighborhood. Residents were asked to prioritize 11 measures on a scale of 1 to 11, with 1 being their highest priority. The charts below summarize the measures that were identified as high priorities (rated as priority 1, 2 or 3) by both meeting attendees and respondents to the web survey. It should be noted that some residents chose to only prioritize some of the measures, usually their highest, while leaving lower priority items blank.

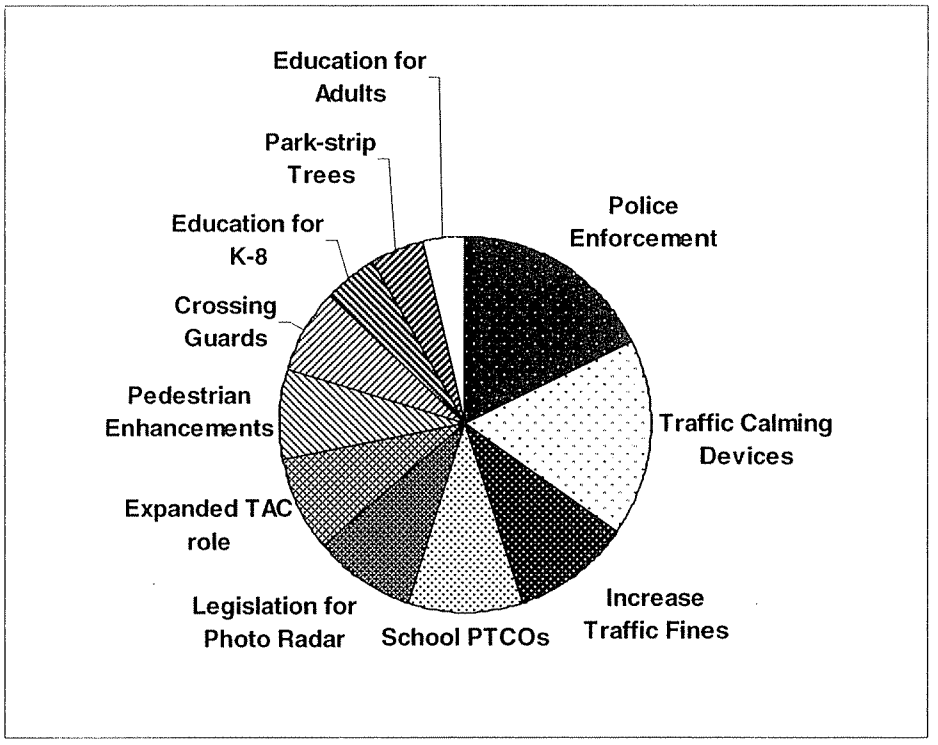

Chart 2 – Fall 2007 TC Community Meeting Survey, Neighborhood High Priorities (1, 2, or 3)

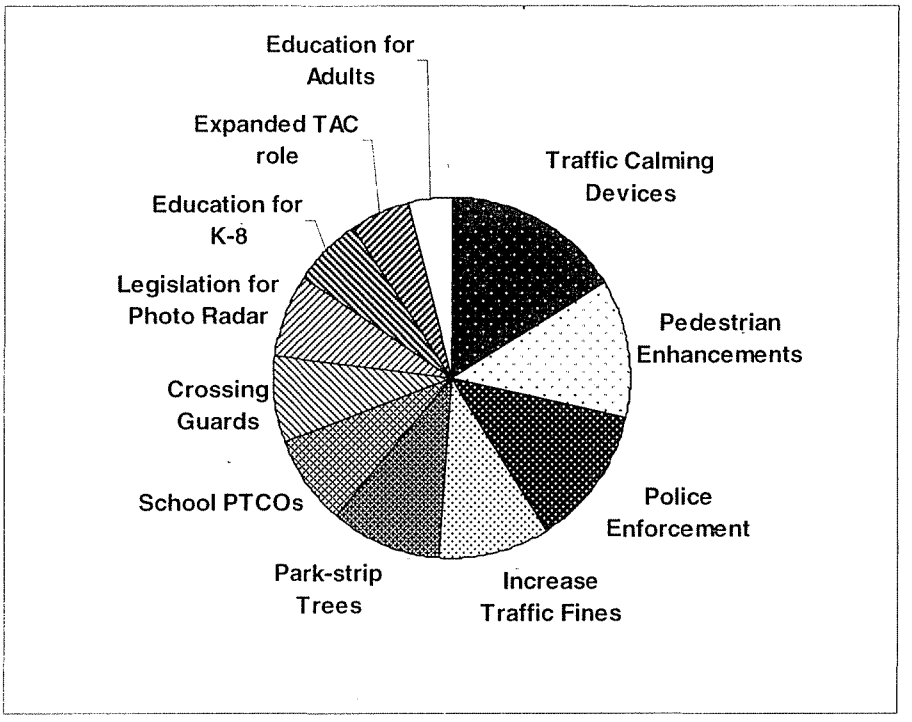

Chart 3 – Fall 2007 TC Web Survey, Neighborhood High Priorities (1, 2, or 3)

As shown on the above charts, high priority items identified in the 2007 TC surveys by meeting attendees or Web respondents are:

- Installing additional traffic calming devices
- Increasing enforcement of traffic and parking regulations in neighborhoods and near schools
- Installing pedestrian enhancements, such as curb ramps, sidewalks, and enhanced crosswalks
- Increasing traffic fines for moving violations in neighborhoods

While most residents at the meetings spoke to the need to improve traffic conditions in their respective neighborhoods, the above survey results are consistent with concerns and suggestions raised by meeting attendees. To a lesser extent, although important to some residents, were the installation of park-strip trees to provide more shade while calming traffic, pursuing legislation for photo radar speed enforcement, providing more crossing guards at K-8 schools, and expanding the role of the Traffic Appeals Commission (TAC) to hear appeals for physical devices, such as road humps.

Neighborhood Desired Policy / Program Changes

Currently, Council Policy 5-6 provides for the possible installation of physical roadway features (such as road humps and small median islands) when an adverse traffic condition exists in a neighborhood. The existing threshold used to determine if an 'adverse condition' exists is if the

speeds, volumes, or number of crashes is 10% or more above the city-wide average. For example, on a 25 mph residential street, the average city-wide speed is 26 mph. Per the existing policy, a street experiencing an average speed of 28.6 mph would be eligible for physical roadway devices.

The TC Survey asked residents to indicate whether, and how, the current threshold should be changed, with the percentage of affirmative (YES) responses shown in Table 2 below.

	Fall 2007 TC Meetings * (varied)	Fall 2007 TC Web Survey (183)
Should the Traffic Calming threshold be changed?	67 %	56 %
Should the threshold be lower than 10% ?	74 %	45 %
Should the threshold be higher than 10% ?	20 %	21 %
Should the Policy consider cumulative impacts?	95 %	97 %

* At the TC meetings the number of residents responding to the questions varied from a low of 139 (higher threshold) to a high of 244 (cumulative impacts)

Table 2 – "Adverse Condition" Threshold Changes

As shown above, two-thirds of meeting attendees felt that the threshold should be changed, and a majority (74%) of these felt that the threshold should be lowered, making it easier for neighborhoods to qualify for physical traffic calming devices. Of the Web respondents, while slightly more than half (56%) felt that the threshold should be changed, less than half (45%) felt that the threshold should be lowered. It should be noted that there were inconsistent responses by some residents at the meetings regarding this question. For example, some residents who indicated that the threshold should not be changed also indicated that the threshold should be lowered or raised. Even though the threshold process was explained at the meetings, it is likely there was some confusion over the 'threshold' concept.

Overwhelmingly, what stands out is that a majority of residents at the meetings, and through the Web survey, expressed a desire for the policy to consider cumulative impacts. The existing policy considers speed, volume and crash history as separate items when determining if an "adverse" traffic condition exists. A cumulative review of these traffic conditions, along with consideration of proximity to facilities that generate pedestrian activity, or unusual conditions, such as special events or major incidents that cause congestion, would allow these factors to be considered collectively.

Neighborhood Enforcement Priorities

A common theme expressed at all meetings was that enforcement of traffic laws (especially speeding) in neighborhoods is inadequate. While some residents understood that coverage of high crash locations was important, they stressed the need to devote some of these resources to

neighborhoods and schools. After the second community meeting, a question was added to the TC Survey to gauge interest in red light running cameras at signalized intersections, with a significant majority of residents in support. Reasons cited were that the cameras would utilize technology that could operate on a 24/7 basis, and they would enable some redeployment of police enforcement to neighborhoods.

Additionally, at the last community meeting, and on the Web survey, Councilmember Oliverio raised a question that asked how fast a vehicle should be traveling in a 25 mph residential neighborhood before a police officer issues a citation. This question was added in response to concerns raised at prior meetings that citations are not issued until a motorist is traveling at a speed that is unsafe for the roadway conditions, not necessarily just because the driver is exceeding the posted speed limit.

	Fall 2007 TC Meetings * (varied)	Fall 2007 TC Web Survey (183)
Support for red light running (RLR) program at signalized intersections	83%	66%
Citation issuance threshold for speeding violations in residential neighborhoods	71% within 6mph of posted 25mph	75% within 6mph of posted 25mph

* At the TC meetings: 244 residents responded to the question on RLR programs; 48 responded to the question on citation issuance

Table 3 – Enforcement Input

Benchmarking of Traffic Calming Programs in Other Cities

The concerns of residents about traffic conditions in their neighborhoods is not unique to San José. Many cities throughout the state and the nation have developed programs to provide a framework to respond to neighborhood concerns. To assist in the review of the traffic calming policy in San José, DOT reviewed programs in 27 other cities, large and small, located throughout California and other states. A listing of these cities is provided as Attachment C.

While all of the programs in other cities are unique, a common trend is the use of threshold criteria to determine if physical roadway devices should be installed. A major difference with San José's program is in the use of average speeds to define adverse traffic conditions, while all of the other cities used the 85th percentile speeds as their threshold criteria. The 85th percentile is that speed at, or below, which 85 percent of motorists travel. The majority of other cities will consider physical measures on a residential street if the 85th percentile speeds are at least 7 mph over the posted or prima facie speed limit, with some cities requiring only 5-6 mph over the speed. A majority of the other cities also limit the application of physical traffic calming measures to residential two-lane roadways, with many cities further specifying that only local, 25 mph posted streets qualify. There are also cities that extend their programs to minor neighborhood collectors and/or streets posted at 30 mph.

In addition, a majority of the other cities have a minimum and/or maximum traffic volume range that must be met in addition to a set level of speeding in order to qualify for physical devices. The minimum volume used was typically 1,000 vehicles per day (vpd), although some cities used a lower range of 500 vpd or specified a higher minimum threshold (such as 2,000 vpd) for neighborhood collectors than for local residential streets. The maximum volume threshold in the other cities varied, with many in the 3,500 - 5,000 vpd range. The purpose of the minimum and maximum volume threshold criteria was to allocate funds to neighborhood streets while discouraging the installation of physical devices on roadways intended to carry higher volumes and/or that may serve as primary emergency response, school bus or transit routes.

As in San José, approximately half of the cities fund traffic calming projects on a first-come, first-served basis. The other cities prioritize projects based upon need, with priority points generally assigned for the severity of speeds, volume, reported crash history, and proximity to pedestrian generators. Some cities also assigned priority points based upon the number of residential households fronting the roadway, level of documented cut-through traffic, school or park frontage, and the level of community support for the project.

Overwhelmingly, a majority of the 27 cities do not have a formalized appeal process for neighborhoods to obtain approval for the installation of physical traffic calming devices when the minimum threshold criteria is not met. However, traffic calming programs in two cities did provide for an appeals process to their city councils.

Review of Neighborhood Priorities

Increase Police Enforcement in Neighborhoods (High Priority)
During the first half of FY 07-08, the Traffic Enforcement Unit (TEU) received approximately 350 requests for neighborhood enforcement. As had previously been the practice, these requests were distributed among the six (6) existing TEU enforcement teams to handle on a case-by-case basis. Responses to these enforcement requests occurred as time permitted, between TEU's focus on enforcing high crash locations, support of special events, and other activities such as DUI checkpoints and traffic safety presentations at high schools. Due to limited resources and coverage of these other city-wide priorities, the response time to a neighborhood enforcement request was typically three (3) months. In response to the overwhelming desire expressed at the TC community meetings and in the surveys for additional enforcement of traffic violations in neighborhoods and near schools, the TEU has recently modified its approach to addressing neighborhood enforcement requests. Instead of responding to each request separately, the TEU has established a database to track and monitor requests by area. This database is merged, geographically, with crash information and proximity to schools. The TEU has also launched its new Web site (www.sjpd.org/teu), for residents and school officials to use to request enforcement in lieu of calling to report their concerns. This online tool

Increase Police Enforcement in Neighborhoods – con't

enables citizens to provide detailed and specific information regarding their concerns. When registering a request for traffic enforcement, the requestor is asked to volunteer as a neighborhood captain so, that if the area is selected for enforcement, the TEU can work closely with the neighborhood representative(s) to fully understand the concern, and assess the effectiveness and satisfaction with the enforcement. Residents who contact the non-emergency 311 number to report a traffic concern will also be encouraged to submit their concern on the new Web site.

In addition to having a more comprehensive understanding of where the most chronic traffic problems exist, the TEU has redirected approximately 30% of the enforcement time they previously dedicated to high crash locations to neighborhood enforcement efforts. With these resources, each of the six (6) TEU teams will be able to provide focused coverage in two (2) neighborhood enforcement areas during a given week. Each neighborhood area will be enforced until the traffic issue is resolved to an acceptable level. It is anticipated that the TEU will be able to handle 48 neighborhood areas a year, with each neighborhood area requiring an average of three (3) months to mitigate any traffic problems; and that this approach will have a much greater impact than the prior case-by-case method. Both the TEU and DOT will closely monitor the effects of the redirection of enforcement officers to neighborhoods.

As part of the FY 07-08 Budget, three (3) officers were approved to be added to the TEU to provide dedicated school and neighborhood traffic enforcement. These officers will be recruited, trained and fully operational by January 2009. At that time, it is likely that the TEU will be able to more effectively address school and neighborhood enforcement requests, while still maintaining their presence at the city's highest crash locations.

Implement a Red Light Running Program at Signalized Intersection

During FY2005-06, 200 red light running (RLR) indicators were installed at over 130 intersections in San José that had experienced four or more crashes associated with RLR violations in the prior three years. RLR indicators are devices that enable police officers to observe RLR violations downstream from an intersection and safely enforce the applicable provisions of the vehicle code. After the RLR indicators were installed, the TEU conducted a study at 20 of the intersections. The study involved observing RLR violations both before and after a six-month period of intensive enforcement. The study results showed that the RLR indicators were effective as an enforcement tool, with approximately 75% fewer violations occurring after the heavy enforcement period.

Although RLR indicators are an effective tool, they only serve to enhance enforcement efforts while officers are present at the intersection. After completion of the focused study, the TEU has not been able to maintain the higher level of enforcement at intersections with the RLR indicators. A benefit of red light cameras used in many cities are that they operate on a 24/7 basis.

Implement a Red Light Running Program at Signalized Intersections – con't

According to the National Safety Council, motor-vehicle accidents are the leading cause of injury-related death in the country. As has occurred in many other states, in 1996 the State of California authorized the use of automated red light running (RLR) systems as a means to address the problem of motorists running red lights. Currently, there are over 90 cities in California with RLR automated enforcement systems.

A majority of neighborhood residents who responded to the TC surveys are supportive of RLR cameras. Although, only about 430 residents responded to the question regarding a potential RLR program, this level of support is consistent with other national surveys regarding this technology. For example, in cities with and without cameras, a survey conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety in 2001, found that over 75% of the public supported the use of red light cameras.

Based upon an audit prepared by the California State Auditor in July 2002, RLR programs are effective at reducing the number of RLR crashes. In the seven cities that were evaluated as part of the audit, on average, RLR crashes were reduced from 11-55% at intersections equipped with RLR cameras. Additionally, the average number of city-wide RLR crashes in a majority of these seven cities declined 10%. The city-wide benefit was attributed to the spillover (or halo) effect that the camera-equipped intersections had on other intersections within the cities. Additionally, the State Auditor's report showed that only two (2) of the audited programs generated significant revenue; with three (3) of the programs operating at a deficit.

Implementing a RLR program, even on a pilot basis, will require additional staffing resources within the Police Department. To determine if a RLR program should be implemented and/or tested in San José, further investigation and detailed analysis should be conducted. This analysis would include how a RLR program would be implemented in San José, whether the program should be initiated on a pilot basis, the costs and resource impacts, and the potential benefits based on other cities' experiences, both in terms of crash reductions and potential revenue losses.

Modify Citation Issuance Threshold used in Enforcement of Speeding Violations

California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 22350, which is most often cited for speeding on city streets, states – *"No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width, of the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property."* The CVC does not authorize any municipality to set a threshold for the enforcement of speed enforcement. When citations are issued, the enforcing officer must be able to justify and explain why the speed – as it relates to CVC Section 22350 – was unsafe for the condition.

Modify Citation Issuance Threshold used in Enforcement of Speeding Violations – con't

The common perception is that officers can issue a citation to any motorist who is observed exceeding the posted speed limit, by any degree. This is only the case on highways where the posted speed limit is 65 or 70 mph (the maximum speed allowable per CVC Section 22349). This is not the case when officers issue a citation for CVC 22350.

Currently, there is no citation issuance threshold that can be modified with regard to the mph over the speed limit that a motorist is traveling.

Increase Fines for Traffic Violations in Neighborhoods

The establishment of traffic fines for moving violations is governed by the State of California and managed at the County level. The fine structure for moving violations is typically the same for residential neighborhood streets as on major arterials. Generally, the determination of the fine amount is a factor of how fast a motorist is traveling over the posted speed limit, whether the violation is a first time or repetitive offense, and other factors, such as whether the violation occurred in a double fine construction zone.

Changing the fine structure by adding an additional penalty for traffic violations on neighborhood streets would require legislative action.

Expand the Installation of Physical Traffic Calming Devices (High Priority)

Overwhelmingly, the resident input at the meetings and survey responses expressed a desire for the installation of physical and electronic traffic calming devices to address neighborhood traffic impacts. At the meetings, a primary reason cited for wanting additional physical measures was that neighborhood enforcement was inadequate and that the devices would control motorist behavior on a 24/7 basis.

As mentioned earlier in this report, a majority of meeting attendees indicated support for lowering the existing 10% threshold criteria for determining if an adverse traffic condition exists in a neighborhood. There was less than 50% support for lowering the threshold among Web survey respondents.

When the initial traffic calming policy was developed, the existing 10% threshold was adopted in

Expand the Installation of Physical Traffic Calming Devices – con't

an attempt to allocate limited City funding to address negative traffic conditions in those neighborhoods experiencing the most severe traffic problems. Since 2001, physical roadway features (traffic circles, road bumps, etc.) have been installed in over 30 neighborhoods, representing about 2% of neighborhoods who have expressed concerns about either speeding or cut-through traffic. To improve pedestrian conditions, approximately 40 crosswalks have been enhanced with solar-powered flashing beacons, pavement embedded flashing lights, or textured asphalt. Additionally, 47 school radar speed display signs have been installed to encourage motorists to slow down in school zones. Many of the crosswalk and school zone enhanced locations were selected with input from various neighborhoods and school districts throughout the City.

If the existing 10% threshold criteria is adjusted downward, it will be easier for neighborhoods to qualify for physical traffic calming devices. However, given the multiple years of prior and existing budget constraints faced by the City, having additional neighborhoods qualify could set up false expectations for projects that the City cannot afford and may never be built. For example, of a representative sample of fifty 25 mph posted residential streets, 4 streets (10%) would qualify for consideration of physical devices based upon the existing policy. If the speed threshold criteria were reduced to 5% (average speeds exceeding 27.3 mph) then 15 streets (30%) could qualify if the only criteria used were speed levels. This would result in a significant workload and budget increase given the 2,300 miles of roadway in San José.

If the speed criteria applied by many of the benchmarked cities is used, specifically 85th percentile speeds of at least 32 mph on a local residential street with a speed limit of 25 mph, 25 (50%) of the sample streets could qualify for physical measures if only speeds were considered. Installations in this order of magnitude are not consistent with the city-wide perception of traffic conditions on residential streets. This number would reduce to about 11 streets (22%) if a minimum volume of 1,000 vpd were also required. This increase is also substantial given the potential city-wide impacts and limited funding availability.

On average, DOT receives 280 concerns annually from residents regarding either excessive speeding or cut-through volume. If the TC Policy were changed in a manner that enables only 15% of these neighborhoods to qualify for physical roadway features, the result would be 42 neighborhoods annually that would need to be addressed. The cost impacts of managing and implementing a program this size is significant. It is not conceivable that the City would ever be able to augment Traffic Calming program funding to the level necessary to implement these projects.

The cost of various types of traffic calming roadway features is dependent on the number and size of devices being installed. For example, a neighborhood project can range from $15,000 for a series of three road humps to several hundred thousand for a neighborhood-wide project with many traffic circles and small median islands or bulb-outs. For example, using an estimated $50,000 to implement traffic calming in 42 neighborhoods would result in a cost of over $2 Million annually for construction costs. On top of this would be the costs associated with providing increased

Expand the Installation of Physical Traffic Calming Devices – con't

staffing to manage the required planning and neighborhood outreach efforts, and for the design work associated with these projects.

Regardless of the above considerations, it is recommended that San José's traffic calming policy be modified to use the 85th percentile speed measure vs. the existing average speed methodology to evaluate neighborhood traffic conditions. When the policy was originally adopted, the use of 'average' speed terminology was believed to be easier for most residents to understand. However, it is a measure that some residents believe is flawed, as it is the speed at which approximately half of motorists are exceeding. Using the 85th percentile speed will provide consideration for what a majority of motorists are traveling and may be more favorably received by residents. In addition, the use of 85th percentile speeds is an industry standard as evidenced by the 27 benchmarked cities.

However, in developing modifications to the policy, careful consideration needs to be given to community priorities and realities of the budget and environmental climate. It is not realistic or practical, even if funds were available, that physical traffic calming measures be installed on a large percentage of residential streets. As is the case in most cities, physical traffic calming measures should be installed on those roadways experiencing severe traffic conditions. No matter how well designed, installing physical devices in the roadway can negatively impact adjacent residential streets, emergency service providers, school bus service, transit and garbage pick-up. Some devices can also negatively impact the environment and motorists that have physical limitations.

For example, road humps are a common traffic calming device requested by residents to slow traffic. However, road humps can frustrate motorists, diverting traffic to adjacent streets, damage large vehicles, increase vehicle emissions associated with braking and accelerating between humps, and increase pain in motorists with neck or back problems.

In developing modifications to Council Policy 5-6, consideration needs to be given to a greater use of devices and technology that encourage slower speeds with minimal negative unintended consequences. An example of this are solar-powered speed feedback signs that can encourage motorists to be aware of their speed, and to slow down if necessary. It is also recommended that regardless of whether funds are available for the installation of additional devices, a factor in the installation of any physical measure should include a consideration of whether resources are available for ongoing operating and maintenance costs.

Modify the Traffic Calming Policy to consider Cumulative Impacts of speed, volume, crashes, pedestrian activity, and proximity to schools or parks (High Priority)

Modifying Council Policy 5-6 to consider cumulative traffic impacts and other factors was a high priority for residents as evidenced by the meeting and Web survey respondents. The consideration of cumulative impacts is also a recommendation identified by the City Auditor's Office in their

Modify the Traffic Calming Policy to consider Cumulative Impacts – con't

2007 report on the Audit of the Traffic Calming Program and a factor of the prioritization process used by approximately half of the other cities benchmarked,. As stated in the audit, and by many of the other cities, having a methodology to prioritize warranted projects is necessary when resources are limited.

Given that the City is entering its 7th consecutive year of budget reductions, and a majority of residents support the concept of cumulative impacts, it is recommended that modifications to the traffic calming policy include a process to prioritize the installation of physical traffic calming projects using City funds.

Modify the Traffic Calming Policy to include provisions for Neighborhoods to Self-fund physical traffic calming devices

Many residents at the traffic calming meetings expressed a desire to have the option of funding traffic calming devices that were either not warranted for installation by Council Policy 5-6, or that were warranted, but could not be installed in a timely manner due to City budget constraints.

The majority of benchmarked cities fund the installation of traffic calming devices if the traffic conditions in a neighborhood exceed a specified threshold. With a few exceptions, most cities have a limited capital budget for physical measures. Several of the cities benchmarked require neighborhoods to contribute to the installation and/or maintenance of traffic calming devices, with some cities requiring contributions to the extensive traffic studies and neighborhood outreach required for some measures. Methods used by other cities to process neighborhood contributions range from the simple (creating a fund to accept contributions) to the complex (establishing neighborhood assessment districts).

The concept of enabling neighborhoods to self-fund traffic calming devices either through individual contributions, use of grants, assessment districts, or partnerships with schools or other agencies is something that should be explored further, and possibly considered in the traffic calming policy. Although not a priority of residents who responded to the web survey, some residents at the meetings indicated support for being able to appeal the findings that traffic calming devices were not warranted for their neighborhood. Allowing neighborhoods the option of self-funding physical devices, would provide a mechanism for the installation of non-warranted features.

What also needs to be addressed in the policy is whether neighborhoods should have the ability to fund any type of traffic calming measure, regardless of whether they are warranted or not, and how ongoing operating and maintenance costs are covered if neighborhood funding is provided.

Expanded School Focus

In FY07-08, a dedicated team of four Parking and Traffic Compliance Officers (PTCO) was established to encourage compliance with parking regulations in school zones during the drop-off and pick-up periods. During the first half of the year, these four officers have visited over 130 schools, and have been well received by schools and parents. In addition to reinforcing parking regulations, the officers have been involved in providing education to school students about safe pedestrian and bicycling behaviors, and distributing bicycle helmets to children. During non-school periods, these officers are supporting other enforcement activities, such as city-wide street sweeping efforts and residential permit parking zones.

All four officers drive hybrid vehicles that will soon be equipped with radar speed display signs. With these signs, in addition to encouraging compliance with parking regulations, these PTCOs will be supporting the traffic calming program by encouraging motorists to adhere to the posted 25mph speed limit in school zones. Many residents expressed a desire for additional PTCO's to provide coverage at more schools. Expanding the current effort would require additional resources, and is being considered as part of the FY08-09 budget process.

Assembly Bill 321

This bill modified the California Vehicle Code (CVC) to authorize a city or county to establish a prima facie speed limit of 15mph in school zones, on two-lane roads that are currently posted with speed limits of 30mph or less. When determining the need to lower the prima facie speed limit, the bill required that the provisions of CVC Section 627, which covers requirements for conducting Engineering and Traffic Surveys to establish posted speed limits be taken into consideration. The California Traffic Control Devices Committee intends to discuss the implementation of Assembly Bill 321 on a statewide basis at its next meeting in April or May of this year.

Council Policy 5-6 Policy Outreach

The existing Council Policy 5-6 includes general guidelines for soliciting input from affected residents and businesses and for consideration of potential negative impacts to emergency service providers, transit and garbage/recycling services. For the most part, the outreach conducted for traffic calming projects has been more comprehensive than the requirements contained in Council Policy 6-30. For example, the installation of physical devices often includes the establishment of a project area, neighborhood meetings, and petitions to verify neighborhood support prior to the installation of temporary measures and permanent devices. Even though the DOT has attempted to ensure that impacted households and businesses have an opportunity to provide input on traffic calming projects, the policy should be expanded to clarify the specific outreach requirements for the various types of physical devices.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- ☐ **Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to $1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- ☐ **Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- ☐ **Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the March 3, 2008 T&E Committee agenda.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Fire Department and the City Attorney's Office.

COST IMPLICATIONS

The cost implications of various changes to Council Policy 5-6 will be evaluated as part of the comprehensive review of the policy and included in the report that is provided to the T&E Committee in May 2008.

JAMES R. HELMER
Director of Transportation

A/C for ROBERT L. DAVIS
Police Chief

For questions please contact Laura Wells at 975-3725, or Lt. Jeff Smith at 277-4525

ATTACHMENT A

2007 TRAFFIC CALMING COMMUNITY SURVEY

Mission Statement: ***The purpose of the City of San José Residential Traffic Calming Community Meetings is to gather input from San José residents to help guide the City Council to ensure that the Policy allows the decision-making process to evolve in an orderly, fair and consistent manner, that adequate resources exist to carry out the Policy and that the Policy leads to services and programs that improve the quality of life in San José neighborhoods.***

1. How safe do you feel traffic conditions are when you travel in San José using the following methods? (*Please check box*)

	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Neither Safe nor Unsafe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe	No Opinion
Driving on San José streets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bicycling in San José	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Walking in San José	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. How safe do you feel when walking in your neighborhood at the following times? (*Please check box*)

	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Neither Safe nor Unsafe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe	No Opinion
During the day	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
During the night	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Please rate how you consider the pace at which traffic flows from acceptable to unacceptable in San Jose. (*Please check box*)

	Very Accept.	Somewhat Accept.	Neither	Somewhat Unaccept.	Very Unaccept.	No Opinion
In your neighborhood	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On City streets during commute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On local freeways & expressways	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	No
4. A neighborhood street may be eligible for physical devices (road bumps, islands, etc.) under the existing traffic calming policy if speeds, volumes or crashes exceed the Citywide average for a similar street by 10%. Should the threshold be changed?	☐	☐

	Yes	No
5. The above threshold should be lower than 10%.	☐	☐
The above threshold should be higher than 10%.	☐	☐

	Yes	No
6. The traffic calming policy should consider cumulative impacts of speed, volume, crashes, pedestrian activity, proximity to schools, parks, etc.	☐	☐

	Yes	No
7. The City should consider a photo radar program for red light running violations at signalized intersections.	☐	☐

(other side, please)

8. If you were to prioritize how to improve traffic conditions in your neighborhood, please rank the following from 1 to 11, in order of your priority *(with 1 being your highest priority and 11 being your lowest).*

More police officers dedicated to enforcing speed laws in neighborhoods	
More school crossing guards at elementary and middle schools	
Adding Parking and Traffic Control Officers dedicated to school drop-off and pick-up activities and residential parking compliance	
The City should work with the State to increase fines for speeding and other moving violations in neighborhoods. (Cities do not have the authority to establish traffic fines.)	
Statewide legislation supporting the use of speed photo radar (NASCOP)	
Installing additional traffic calming devices such as road bumps, traffic circles, speed display signs	
Additional traffic safety education for school children (K-8)	
Additional traffic safety education for adults and senior citizens	
Installing additional park-strip trees to calm traffic and provide more shade over sidewalks	
Installing pedestrian enhancements, such as curb ramps for the disabled, better lighting and crosswalks.	
Expand the role of the Traffic Appeals Commission to hear appeals for physical devices, such as road bumps. (Currently, the commission only hears appeals on denials of stop signs.)	

COMMENTS:_____

ATTACHMENT B

2007 TRAFFIC CALMING COMMUNITY SURVEYS

1. How safe do you feel traffic conditions are when you travel in San José using the following methods? (*Please check box*)

	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Neither Safe nor Unsafe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe	No Opinion
Driving on San José streets						
• Meetings	11%	44%	16%	23%	5%	1%
• Web Survey	14%	47%	18%	18%	3%	0%
Bicycling in San José						
• Meetings	3%	11%	14%	26%	33%	13%
• Web Survey	2%	15%	12%	32%	25%	14%
Walking in San José						
• Meetings	10%	28%	17%	28%	16%	1%
• Web Survey	12%	35%	15%	26%	11%	1%

2. How safe do you feel when walking in your neighborhood at the following times? (*Please check box*)

	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Neither Safe nor Unsafe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe	No Opinion
During the day						
• Meetings	36%	34%	7%	14%	9%	0%
• Web Survey	49%	29%	7%	13%	2%	0%
During the night						
• Meetings	10%	27%	12%	34%	16%	1%
• Web Survey	14%	34%	9%	27%	16%	0%

3. Please rate how you consider the pace at which traffic flows from acceptable to unacceptable in San Jose. (*Please check box*)

	Very Accept.	Somewhat Accept.	Neither	Somewhat Unaccept.	Very Unaccept.	No Opinion
In your neighborhood						
• Meetings	9%	26%	8%	22%	35%	0%
• Web Survey	10%	22%	8%	31%	29%	0%
On City streets during commute						
• Meetings	4%	24%	16%	29%	23%	4%
• Web Survey	4%	26%	14%	32%	21%	3%
On local freeways & expressways						
• Meetings	5%	31%	16%	23%	23%	2%
• Web Survey	4%	30%	16%	36%	14%	0%

2007 Traffic Calming Community Survey – Cont'd

		Yes	No
4. A neighborhood street may be eligible for physical devices (road bumps, islands, etc.) under the existing traffic calming policy if speeds, volumes or crashes exceed the Citywide average for a similar street by 10%. Should the threshold be changed?			
	• Meetings	67%	33%
	• Web Survey	56%	44%

		Yes	No
5. The above threshold should be lower than 10%.			
	• Meetings	74%	26%
	• Web Survey	45%	55%
The above threshold should be higher than 10%.			
	• Meetings	20%	80%
	• Web Survey	21%	79%

		Yes	No
6. The traffic calming policy should consider cumulative impacts of speed, volume, crashes, pedestrian activity, proximity to schools, parks, etc.			
	• Meetings	95%	5%
	• Web Survey	97%	3%

		Yes	No
7. The City should consider a photo radar program for red light running violations at signalized intersections.			
	• Meetings	83%	17%
	• Web Survey	66%	34%

ATTACHMENT C

TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAMS IN VARIOUS JURISDICTIONS

CITY	POPULATION	AREA
Boulder, CO	91,000	12 sq. mi.
Campbell	38,000	6 sq. mi.
Cupertino	50,000	13 sq. mi.
Danville	43,000	18 sq. mi.
Livermore	81,000	22 sq. mi.
Long Beach	462,000	50 sq. mi.
Los Altos	27,000	8 sq. mi.
Los Angeles	3.7 Million	469 sq. mi.
Mountain View	73,000	12 sq. mi.
Oakland	400,000	56 sq. mi.
Portland, OR	568,000	136 sq. mi.
Reno	212,000	69 sq. mi.
Riverside	294,000	80 sq. mi.
Sacramento	408,000	97 sq. mi.
San Diego	1.3 Million	342 sq. mi.
San Francisco	777,000	47 sq. mi.
San Jose	**974,000**	**175 sq. mi.**
San Leandro	80,000	15 sq. mi.
San Mateo	95,000	12 sq. mi.
San Ramon	52,000	11 sq. mi.
Santa Clara	114,000	19 sq. mi.
Saratoga	33,000	12 sq. mi.
Scottsdale, AZ	231,000	184 sq. mi.
Seattle, WA	582,000	84 sq. mi.
Stockton	286,000	60 sq.mi.
Sunnyvale	131,000	22 sq. mi.
Washington, D.C.	572,000	61 sq. mi.
West Sacramento	44,000	21 sq. mi.